Teaching Females

Question: What is the ruling of the Shari'ah concerning teaching English to Muslim girls?

Answer: There is no harm in learning to write one's name and address in English because should a woman's husband ever go out on a journey, she will need to address the envelope in English. It is however not permissible to send Muslim girls to schools and colleges to acquire degrees and higher learning because the harms outweigh the benefits. Experience has shown that English (secular) education and the environment of colleges tend to corrupt the beliefs, character and habits of Muslims. Immodesty and immorality is bred, as Akbar Ilaahabaadi said in a poem (which means):

"While eyes are focussed only on academic benefits,
dimmer and dimmer becomes the lamp of Deeni beliefs"

Hadhrat Sheikhul Hind Moulana Mahmoodul Hasan رحمه الله said, "If the end result of English (secular) education is that people become coloured in the hues of the Christians, that they poke fun at their religion and those who adhere to their religion and that they start to deify their governments, then it is better for a Muslim to remain ignorant rather than receive such an education."[1]

Hakeemul Ummah Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله says, "The objection is raised against the Ulema that they stop people from attaining modern education and classify it as impermissible. I can swear on oath that if modern education did not have the effect we see it generally has on people, the Ulema would never have forbidden it. However, we can see what is happening today. With the exception of very few, we see that the more educated a person is in modern education, the less interest he has in salaah, fasting and in the other commands of the Shari'ah. In fact, he tends to contradict every injunction of Deen, saying that it is progress."[2]

He also said, "Doing nothing in the Islaamic Madrassahs is millions of times better than being busy in English (secular) institutions because although there may be nothing achieved, at least the person's beliefs are not being corrupted and he will continue having love for the people of Deen. This is despite the fact that such a person may eventually only attain the position of a sweeper in some Masjid. This is better than attaining high grades in secular education and becoming a lawyer or a barrister while one's beliefs have been corrupted, one's Imaan has been shaken and one starts to show disrespect towards Allaah, His Rasool ρ, the Sahabah ψ and the pious men of Deen. This is not only something that happens to most people, but it almost certainly happens. This preference is apparent to anyone who loves the Deen. As for those who have no concern for the fading of Deen, he may say what he pleases."[3]

Someone once asked Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله, "When admitting boys into the Aligarh University, I fear that their Deen must not be destroyed." Hadhrat Moulana replied, "That will happen what Allaah wills, but as far as apparent means

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[1] *Aligarh Muslim University*, 1920.
[2] *Fadlul Ilm wal Amal* Pg.8.
[3] *Huqooqul Ilm* Pgs. 63,64.

are concerned, their admission is a strong cause of such destruction. Because of this, it is better to have them have *Faalij* (paralysis) then entering a college because while one harms the body, the other harms the Deen. The real disease is that which will develop by entering a college."[4]

Someone once mentioned to Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله , "In Kashmir, it is the Muslims who sweep the streets, but now that some education is being imparted, they are beginning to leave the trade." "What type of education is this?" Hadhrat Moulana asked. The man replied, "English (secular) education for which the schools have now opened." Hadhrat Moulana remarked, "Worse than the occupation of sweeping the streets is that of acquiring English (secular) education. Up to now, they have been sullied with visible dirt, now they will be sullied by internal dirt because it is often seen that this type of education corrupts beliefs."[5]

Dr. Hunter said, "There is not a single youngster who has studied in our schools without learning to think that the beliefs of his elders are wrong, regardless of whether he is Hindu or Muslim."[6]

Gandhi said, "The higher education of these colleges seem like clear and clean milk to which a bit of poison is added."[7]

Sir Sayyid said, "Likewise, girl's schools have also been established with an unpleasant modus operandi that convinces one that this system has been out in place only to make them wayward and to remove them from *purdah*."[8]

In an address to an Educational Conference for Muslim students, Sir Abdullaah Haroon noted, "The present system of education that lord Michael had introduced has destroyed everything that we once held dear."[9]

Speaking at a gathering of the All India Muslim Educational, the Honourable Mr. Fadhl Haqq who was president of the Bengal district said, "In reality, the education being imparted in schools and universities teach neither *dunya* nor Deen. If a Muslim child attains the highest degree but loses his Deen in the process, then of what use can his degree be to people? Benefit will be attained only when he progresses while remaining a Muslim. How well did not Akbar Ilaahabaadi say when he stated (a poem which means):

"While the philosopher says, 'So what if you lose your religion?'
I say, 'Dear brother! If you lose your religion, you have lost everything."[10]

Mr. Hasan Riyaadh who is the editor of the Muslim League's newsletter *Manshoor* (Delhi) writes in the 9 June 1940 edition, "In the past thirty years, Muslim children have mostly been attending English schools. The result is that all those who are educated are now deprived of Muslim culture, Muslim character and Islaamic principles."

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[4] *Malfoozaat* (Vol.3 Pg.107).
[5] *Malfoozaat* (Vol.5 Pg.273)
[6] *Musalmaanaane Hind* Pg.142.
[7] *Aligarh Muslim University*, 1920.
[8] *Asbaab Baghaawat Hind*.
[9] The daily *Anjaam*, Delhi 20 February 1941.
[10] The weekly *Madinah*, Bijnor 9 October 1938.

It is an accepted principle of the Shari'ah that staying away from harm is better than attaining some benefit. Although it is Sunnah to gargle the mouth when performing wudhu and when bathing, it will be forbidden to do so if there is fear of it going down the throat while fasting. Similarly, although it is Sunnah to pass the fingers through the hair when making wudhu, it is Makrooh when in the state of Ihraam because of the fear of hairs breaking off.

Although women were allowed to go to the Masjid for salaah during the time of Rasulullaah ρ, Hadhrat Umar τ stopped it during his time because of the rise of evil. In support of this decision, Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها said, **"Had Rasulullaah ρ seen the condition of women (nowadays), he would have stopped them from going to the Masjid."**[11] **If Nabi ρ would have prevented women from the Masaajid, how could he ever have allowed them to go to universities?**

The gist of the matter is that attending such institutions where a Muslim's Imaan, beliefs, good character and morals are in jeopardy is not permissible for anyone to attend, regardless of whether the person is male or female. The difference is that females are more quickly affected by such environments and because they are not required to earn an income, they need not attend such places at all. As for a boy who has completed his Islaamic studies and is steadfast upon Islaamic character and morals, there is scope for him to acquire as much English education as he pleases. However, there can be no guarantee that he will remain untainted. Therefore, should he not be entirely convinced that he will be able to remain steadfast upon Islaamic morals and that he will be able to remain unaffected by the environment, then it is best to stay away from it just as a person would stay away from a fatal disease. It is therefore necessary for parents to safeguard their children from such cultures and types of education.

It is in the best interests of our children that we be concerned about their religious well-being and their Aakhirah. Our pious predecessors used to say, **"A friend is he who strives to rectify one's Aakhirah even at the expense of one's worldly comfort. On the other hand, an enemy is one who strived to destroy one's Aakhirah, even though there may be worldly benefits."**[12] **And Allaah knows best what is most correct.**

Giving Women Secular Education

Question: Many people in our area are sending their daughters to college and we notice that after taking admission, their dressing, their ways of life and every aspect of their lives change and they gradually even lose their modesty. Their parents send them only because they want them to attains some degree or another and to eventually occupy some important post. What is the ruling regarding sending them to such places for this reason?

Answer: Parents who send their children to colleges are really their enemies. It is stated in *Majaalisul Abraar*, "A friend is he who strives to rectify one's Aakhirah even at the expense of one's worldly comfort. On the other hand, an enemy is one who strived to destroy one's Aakhirah, even though there may be worldly benefits."[13]

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[11] Abu Dawood (Vol.1 Pg.91).
[12] *Majaalisul Abraar* (Pg.500).
[13] (Pg.500).

Hakeemul Ummah Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله said, "It is better to have them have *Faalij* (paralysis) then entering a college because while one harms the body, the other harms the Deen. The real disease is that which will develop by entering a college."[14]

There is no doubt in the fact that those girls who attend colleges are the most free-thinking, most immodest and most against *purdah*. This is the result of nothing else but secular education. Even the late Sir Sayyid who was a staunch supporter of English education was forced to admit, "Likewise, girl's schools have also been established with an unpleasant modus operandi that convinces one that this system has been out in place only to make them wayward and to remove them from *purdah*."[15]

When a woman loses her modesty, she has lost everything. Modesty is an exceptionally integral part of Imaan, because of which Rasulullaah ρ said, **"Verily modesty and Imaan are inseparable partners. When the one is removed, the other also leaves."**[16] From this, we can clearly see whether parents are friends or enemies of their children by sending them to college. Allaah says in the Qur'aan: ***"Save yourselves and your families from the Fire of Jahannam."***[17]
It is the parents who shall bear full responsibility for the corruption of their children's behaviour because a Hadith states, "Every child is born on *Fitrah* (the natural inclination to follow and practise Islaam). It is the parents who make the child into either a Jew, a Christian or a fire-worshipper." [18]

While a person may progress materially by attending college, he certainly destroys his Aakhirah by doing so. Everything that causes such harm is Haraam and forbiddedn by virtue of the verse: ***"but the sin of it outweighs the benefit"***. Rasulullaah ρ said, "Whoever loves his life in this world will damage his life in the Aakhirah and whoever loves his life in the Aakhirah will do damage to his life in this world. You should therefore give preference to that which is everlasting (the Aakhirah) over that which is temporary (this world)."

Hadhrat Salmaan Faarsi τ said, "When a person becomes indifferent towards the things of this world, his heart become illuminated with wisdom and his limbs assist him to worship Allaah. You should therefore give preference to that which is everlasting (the Aakhirah) over that which is temporary (this world)."[19]

When a girl is close to coming of age and not yet of age, it will still be forbidden for her to go out of the house without *purdah*, just as it is for one of age. A Hadith states that a woman arrives in the form of a Shaytaan and leaves in the form of a Shaytaan. This means that just as Shaytaan whispers evil in to people's hearts, so too, a woman without *purdah* causes evil thoughts to develop in a person's mind.

Another Hadith states, "A woman is an object of concealment, so when she leaves her home, Shaytaan ogles at her (trying hard to involve her and others looking at her in sin)." Yet another Hadith states, "Allaah curses the one who looks (at a non-Mahram woman) and the one who is looked at."[20]

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[14] *Malfoozaat* (Vol.3 Pg.107).
[15] *Asbaab Baghaawat Hind*.
[16] Bayhaqi.
[17] Surah Tahreem.
[18] *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.21).
[19] *Minhaajul Aabideen*.
[20] *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.270).

Rasulullaah ρ also said, **"Looking (at non-Mahram men and women) is the fornication of the eyes, hearing (them speaking) is the fornication of the ears, speaking (to them) is the fornication of the tongue and touching (them) is the fornication of the hands."**[21]

All the above develops when a woman emerges from her home without *purdah*. She therefore sins with every step she takes and also involves others in sin. The pure wives of Rasulullaah ρ were instructed to ***"remain glued to your homes"*** and when it was very necessary to go out, they were instructed to ***"draw their jalaabeeb over themselves"*** (i.e. to cover themselves from head to toe). If they had this instruction, how can it not apply to other Muslim women? When women are not allowed to go to the Masjid for salaah, how can they attend colleges and universities? Then too, they go out wearing clothing that is as good as none at all. Rasulullaah ρ mentioned that a time will come when women "will be dressed yet undressed and will therefore entice others and be prone to enticement themselves." About such women, Rasulullaah ρ said, "they will not even smell the fragrance of Jannah" let alone enter Jannah. How can it be permissible for Muslim women to attend college and walk in front of non-Mahram men wearing clothing that leaves nothing to the imagination?

Rasulullaah ρ said, "If a man walks behind a woman and sees even the form of her bones, he will not even smell the fragrance of Jannah." This Hadith makes it clear that it is forbidden for a man to see the shape of a woman's body even though she wears heavy clothing that does not easily expose the body.[22]

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[21] Muslim (Vol.2 Pg.336).
[22] Shaami (Vol.5 Pg.321).